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ABSTRACT

A biographical sketch of Frances Densmore, ethnologist of Native American music, and seven articles describing the lives of the Dakota and Ojibwe people as Densmore saw them are presented. The biographical sketch recounts Ms. Densmore's study of Ojibwe music and her ability to copy songs from memory when listening to them at fairs or attending tribal ceremonials, giving her the opportunity to learn more about Ojibwe and Dakota customs, religion, and lifestyle. Since Densmore spent more time visting the Ojibwe people than the Dakota people, the descriptions presented of the Dakota are shorter and less complete than those of the Ojibwe. Intended for children to read, the material briefly describes homes of the Dakota and Ojibwe; their clothing; food; how they travelled; skills such as weaving, fishing, and leathermaking; picture writing and sign language used to tell what happened in the past or to communicate with others; and child rearing. Throughout the articles are captioned photographs taken between 1907 and 1920 of Ms. Densmore's visits to the White Earth, Red Lake, Mille Lacs, and Leech Lake reservations. (ERB)

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special issue

Dakota and Ojibwe People in Minnesota

by Frances Densmore

Winter and Spring 1977
roots

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Cover Photo Frances Densmore outside of her office at the Bureau of American Ethnology in Washington, D. C., 1913. (Bureau of American Ethnology Archives)

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The Minnesota Historical Society is pleased to publish Frances Densmore's manuscript on Dakota and Ojibwe people in Minnesota. Because of its importance for children, the editor of *Roots* decided that it warranted fuller publication than a single issue would provide. For that reason, this magazine is a special DOUBLE NUMBER covering both Winter and Spring. You will receive no further issues this year. We hope that you agree with us that the Densmore material warranted such treatment. Individual copies of this issue are available at $3.00 each.

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Dakota and Ojibwe People in Minnesota

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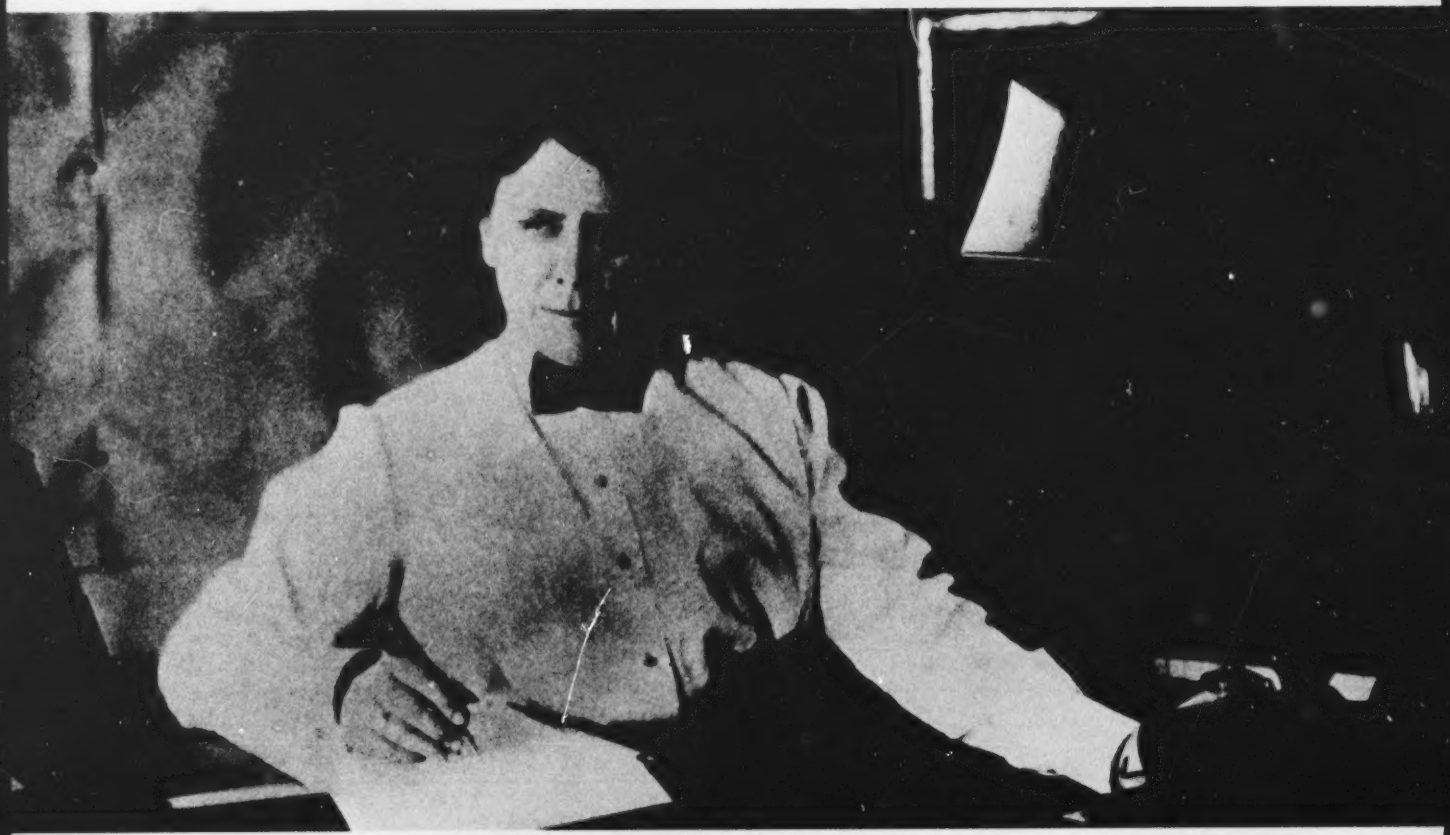

Densmore transcribing songs in her office at the Bureau of American Ethnology in Washington, D. C., 1913.
(Bureau of American Ethnology Archives)

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Frances Densmore 5
by Ivan Musicant

Dakota and Ojibwe People in Minnesota
by Frances Densmore

Homes 13
Clothing 17
Food 21
Travel 27
Industries 33
Picture Writing 43
Children at Home 47

Frances Densmore, 1888.

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Frances Densmore

by Ivan Musicant

"How did you happen to take up the study of Indian music?"

"I heard an Indian drum when I was very, very young. Others heard the same drum, and the sound was soon forgotten. But I have followed it across the continent from British Columbia to the Everglades of Florida, over the plains and the mountains, across the desert — always the Indian drum calling me. I have heard it in strange places, in the dawn and at midnight, with its mysterious throb."

So said Frances Densmore, one of the nation's foremost ethnologists of Native American music. She was born in Red Wing, Minnesota, on May 21, 1867. She died there 90 years later, still studying Indian music.

What is ethnology? And what is a "musical" ethnologist? Ethnology is the study of cultures — where people live, why they live there, how they live, and how their customs are similar to or different from other groups of people. A musical ethnologist studies the music of a people — its importance, its history, and its similarities to or differences from the music of other groups.

Frances Densmore began her musical training very early. As a child and as a teenager, she wanted only to teach piano and play a church organ. But then she "heard an Indian drum." The sound came from a Dakota village on Prairie Island in the Mississippi River near her home in Red Wing. She asked her mother about the people who lived there.

When she was 19 years old, Frances left Minnesota for Ohio and the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. She remained at Oberlin for two years before returning to St. Paul.

In 1888 Frances went to Boston for more piano and musical training. Once again she "heard an Indian drum." A woman named Alice Fletcher had written a book describing the Omaha tribe and their music. Frances read the book, and it was to change her whole life.

She began to meet Indian people, not on reservations where they lived, but at fairs and exhibitions where villages were built to show tourists "how Indians lived." At the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, Frances met the famous Apache leader, Geronimo. She received from him what may well have been the first song in her collection of Indian music.

Geronimo was a very old man by that time. Frances came upon him sitting in front of a teepee, whittling an arrow and singing to himself. She asked if she could

(F.D.) Mille Lacs views — Frances Densmore

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write down the song. Before the old warrior could reply, they were engulfed by a crowd of tourists.

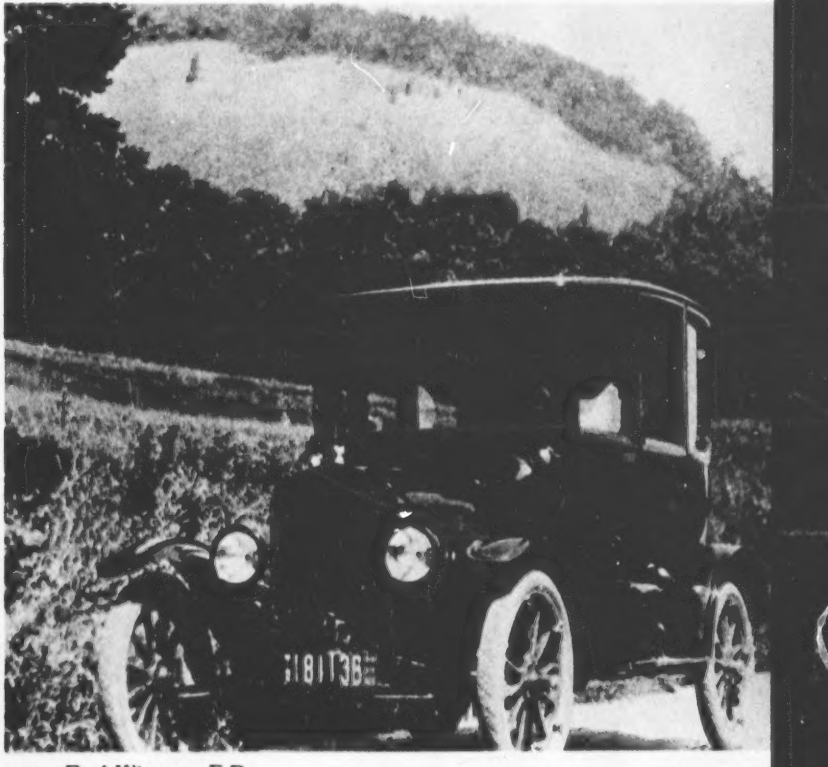
Frances finally did write down Geronimo's song, standing behind a tree, copybook in hand, while he sang softly to himself. "The curious throng did not stop to listen to his singing," she said. "They saw only an old Indian sitting on a box, whittling an arrow — but before his eyes there stretched the plains and the mountains, with never a white man to bar their beauty."

By the turn of the century Densmore had copied many songs from memory or by listening to them at fairs. But she had not yet begun the formal study for which she later became known. That started in 1901, when Frances paid two Dakota women from the Prairie Island village to sing for her. Shortly after meeting with the women, Densmore began her writing career that would total 22 books and over 100 articles.

In 1905 with her sister, Margaret, Frances visited the Ojibwe villages at Grand Marais and Grand Portage on the north shore of Lake Superior. There for the first time she saw the Ojibwe religion practiced. She met Shingibis, a man who continued to practice the rites of the Grand Medicine Society.

From him Densmore hoped to learn more about Ojibwe music, customs, and religion. "I asked Shingibis if he knew the hunting songs that have magic power over

Margaret. —F.D.



Picnic pictures near Red Wing. —F.D.

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the animals," she said. "A quizzical smile crossed his kindly face, as he replied that when he went hunting he did not sing, but kept very still, took good aim, and shot the game."

Shingibis did agree, however, to hold a religious ceremony for her. That night Frances and Margaret went to the place for the ceremony. Frances described the setting: "Shingibis was watching for us and ushered us into one of the wigwams, motioning us to seats and introducing us to Blue Sky. Around the fire in the center were fresh sprigs laid carefully on the ground. Shingibis seated himself upon some bright splint mats at the end of the wigwam. Beside him was a wooden box, upon which stood a nickel alarm clock and a small kerosene lamp. Before him stood his Grand Medicine tom-tom with its top of soft brown deerskin.

"We sat in respectful silence until Shingibis was ready to begin.

"The songs were full of wild beauty, but I did not attempt to use a notebook — it would have seemed a sacrilege. Shingibis sang one song after another, beating the tom-tom with the curved stick in his right hand and shaking the Grand Medicine rattle in his left."

Later that year the Densmore sisters traveled to the White Earth reservation to see the July 14 celebration, held on the anniversary of the first arrival of some Ojibwe bands at that reservation. Frances watched and listened. There she decided to record Ojibwe music, as Alice Fletcher had recorded the songs of the Omaha.

After the celebration, she went to Detroit Lakes. She no longer carried only a copybook for writing down the words and music of the songs, but she also had a borrowed phonograph to record the music. Using the back room of a local music store for a studio, Frances hired an Ojibwe named Kitchimakwa, or Big Bear, to sing for her. This he did, filling 12 wax cylinders with his ancient songs.

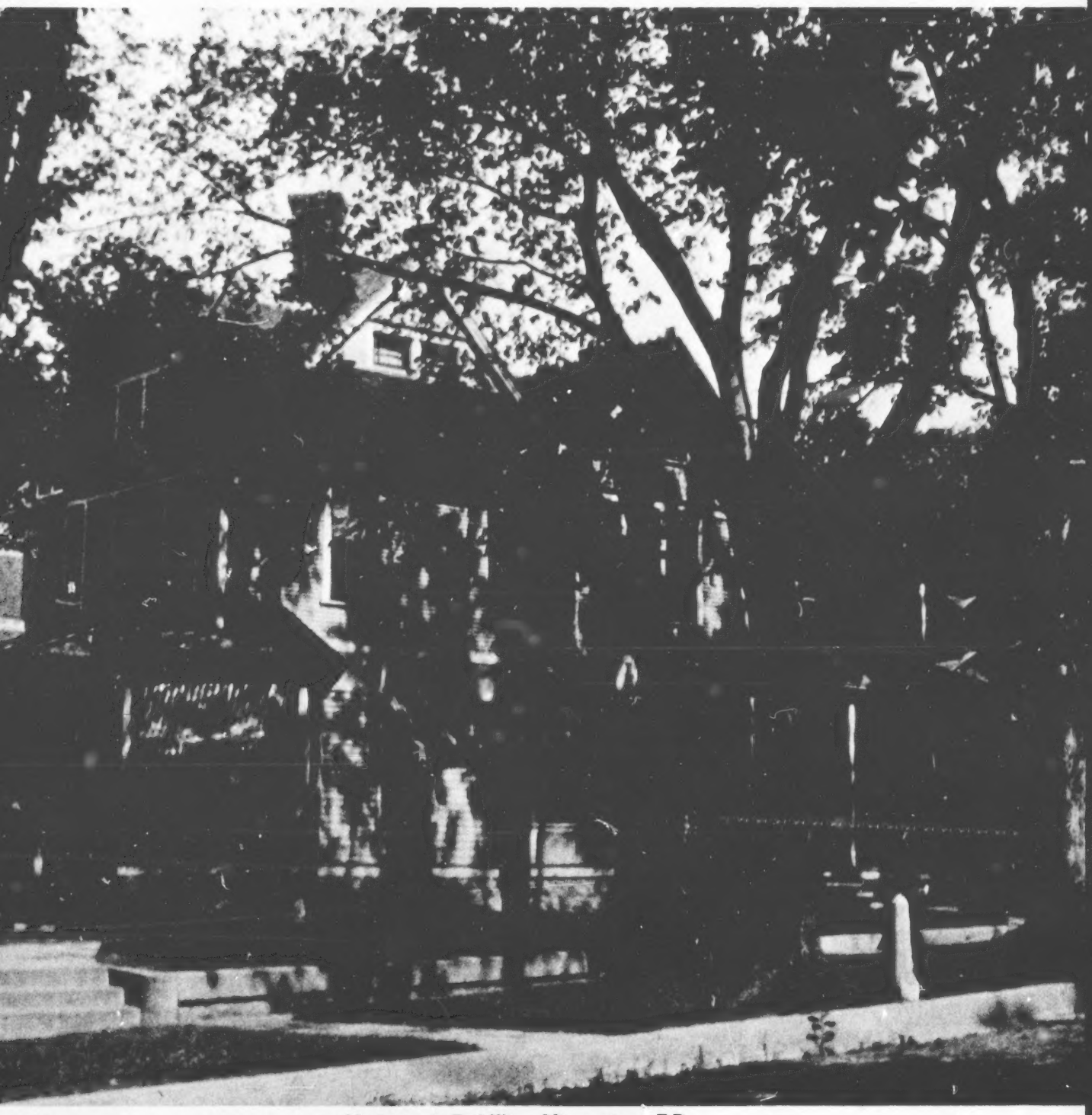
Frances and her sister then went to Onigum on the Leech Lake reservation. When they arrived there, they learned that Flat Mouth, the last hereditary leader of the Pillager band, was dying. A government doctor said that Flat Mouth's condition was hopeless and that nothing could save him.

Flat Mouth asked that a healing ceremony of the Grand Medicine Society be performed. Frances watched the entire rite that ended with the firing of a rifle, as the old chief's spirit passed on.

Densmore believed that these ceremonies had to be recorded or they would be lost. She needed a sponsor and wrote to the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution for a grant of money to carry on the work. The bureau gave her $150. With this Frances bought an Edison Home Phonograph, the best recording machine of its time, and returned to Onigum to record music.

Her work with the bureau spanned 40 years and took Frances Densmore across the North American continent. She learned about the music, customs, legends, and medicines of 12 tribes. In every recording session she paid the people for their information. Often she would not record a song, even if it was offered, for some songs dealt with religion and could bring trouble to the person who sang them.

Frances saw her work as "a race against time." She said, "I obtained a great many songs that would have died with the old men. They wouldn't teach them to the



My home in Red Wing, Minnesota. —F.D.

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Frances Densmore

young men. But they were willing to record them, because they thought that they would bring a greater understanding of Indians to white men."

Frances left the Bureau of American Ethnology in 1933, but she did not stop working. During this time she traveled to Florida and learned songs from the Seminole. Then she went on to Mississippi where she recorded dance and war songs of the Choctaw. In 1939 Densmore returned to the bureau, taking up her field work once more at the age of 72.

Before 1924 Densmore recorded music on more than 2,400 wax cylinders. After that time she used a dictating machine that was powered by batteries or electric current. The early cylinders could be played only a few times before they wore out. With Densmore's help the Library of Con-

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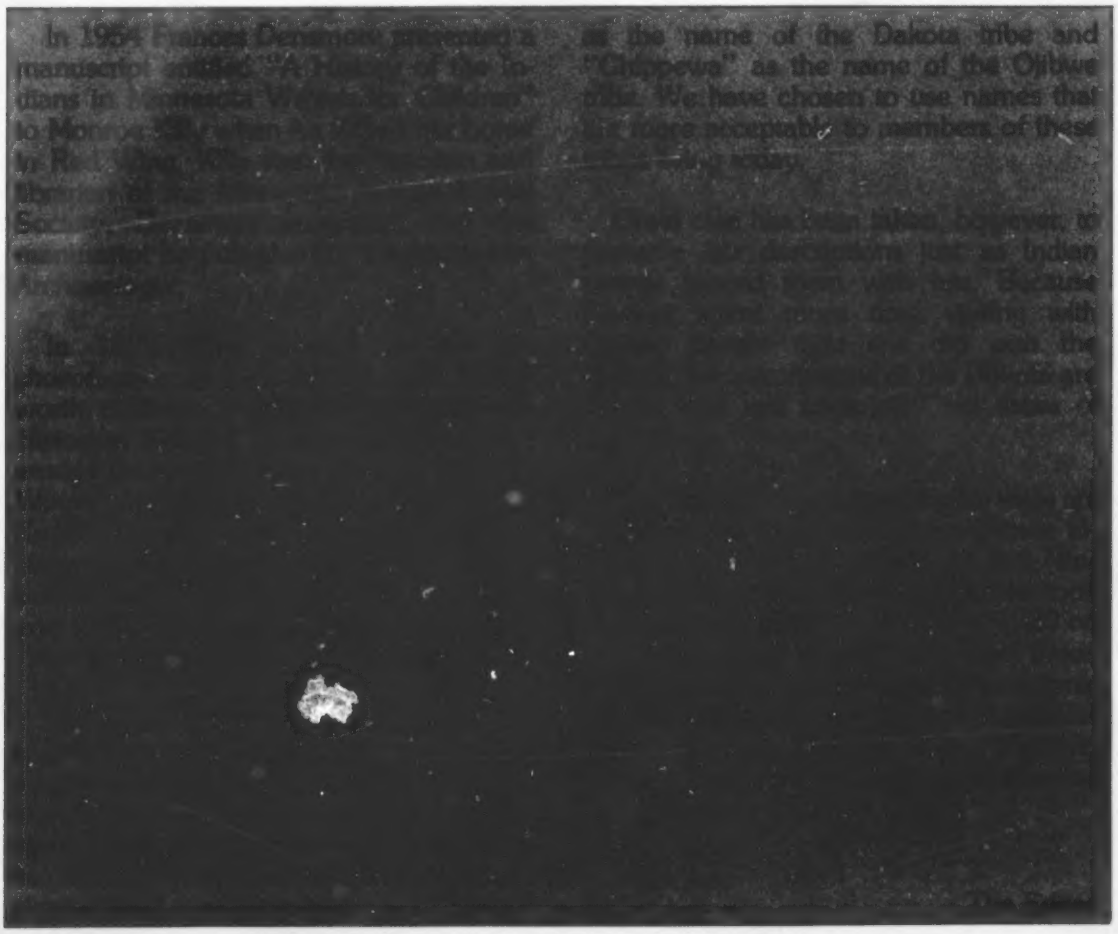
gress in 1948 transferred the songs onto records, preserving them for the future.

When she was 87 years old, Frances went to the University of Florida to teach classes on Indian music. She continued to record the music of the Seminole while teaching. Three years later on June 5, 1957, Frances Densmore died. She had studied the music and customs of Native Americans for almost 70 years.

What can be said about this woman? As an outsider she saw the lives of Indian people during a time of great change. Often she made false judgments about their lives because of her own beliefs. She was not unlike other non-Indians who believed that Indian people would disappear as a distinct culture. She mistakenly thought this was sure to happen and that it would be to their benefit.

But Frances Densmore left a record of Indian life and Indian music of interest and value to both Indians and non-Indians. Perhaps it is most fitting to close with her own words: "We have taken from the Indian his land and his hunting ground, but he is carrying his song with him. Strange as it may seem, the Indian is willing to give his songs."



Sioux teepee. —F.D.

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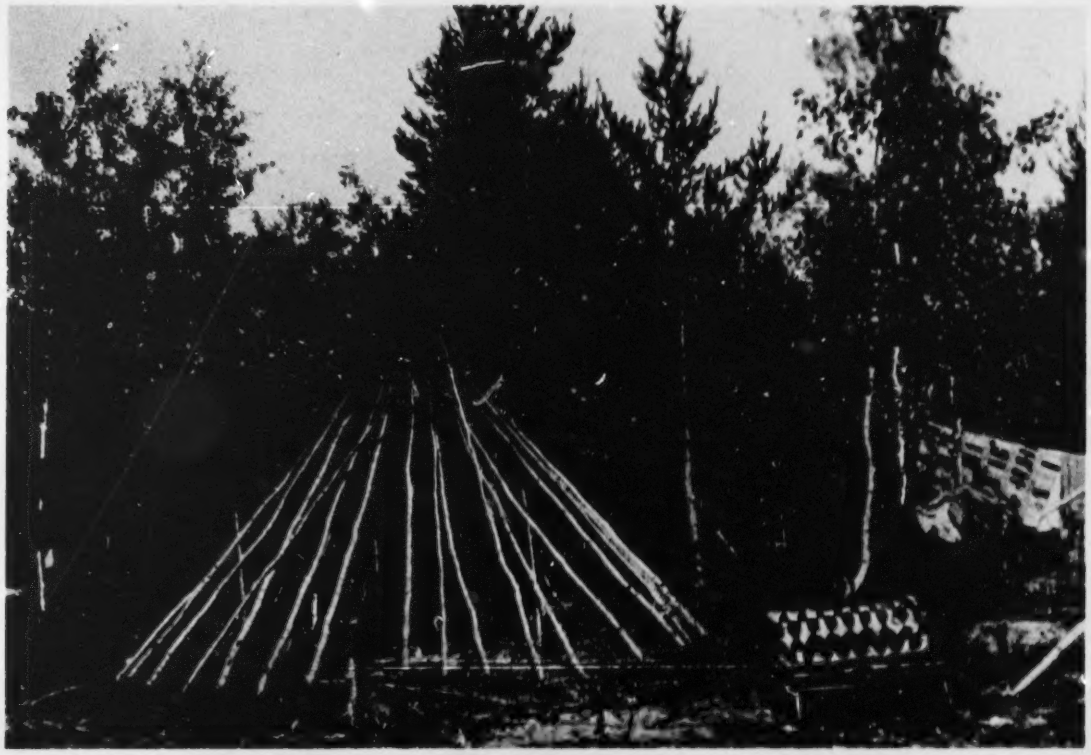
Homes



The frame of an Ojibwe teepee. Mille Lacs Reservation

Around Mille Lacs Lake in the 1700s, the Dakota lived in earth lodges that were like huge piles of earth, hollow inside, with a smoke hole in the top. They were large enough for many families. The lodges were made of a strong framework of logs and poles, flat enough on top so that people could sit on them in the evenings. Pieces of grassy turf were laid on the roof like shingles, and after a while, grass and flowers grew there.

The teepee was the typical dwelling of the Dakota after they moved to the plains. It could be taken down easily and carried from one place to another, as the people hunted the buffalo.

A teepee was pointed and consisted of a number of poles with a cover of hide or cloth. In the old days the cover was made of 16 or 18 buffalo hides sewed together in a very large piece that would fit around the poles. The front edges were held together by wooden "pins," except where an opening was left for the door.

Two little pockets at the top of the teepee cover held the ends of long poles. These poles were outside the teepee. If the

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Frame for dwelling. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

wind changed, a woman went outside and moved the poles to suit the direction of the wind. Then the smoke would go out of the top of the teepee.

A fire was made in the middle, and the people sat or slept around the sides. For seats they had piles of willow sticks covered with thick, soft buffalo robes. The lower edge of the teepee cover was fastened to the ground with pegs.

The wigwam was the common shelter of the Ojibwe who lived in the woods and along the lakes and rivers. It was shaped like half of a great walnut shell with the entrance at one end. While the poles of a teepee could be taken down and carried from one place to another, the framework of a wigwam could not be moved. Its poles were forced deep into the ground.

After a row of poles was driven down for each side of the wigwam, the poles were bent over and tied together to make the

Tying the poles of a wigwam frame together.
Mille Lacs Reservation

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roof. A smoke hole was left in the middle. A family might have one skeleton of a wigwam in the place where they made maple sugar and another where they gathered wild rice.

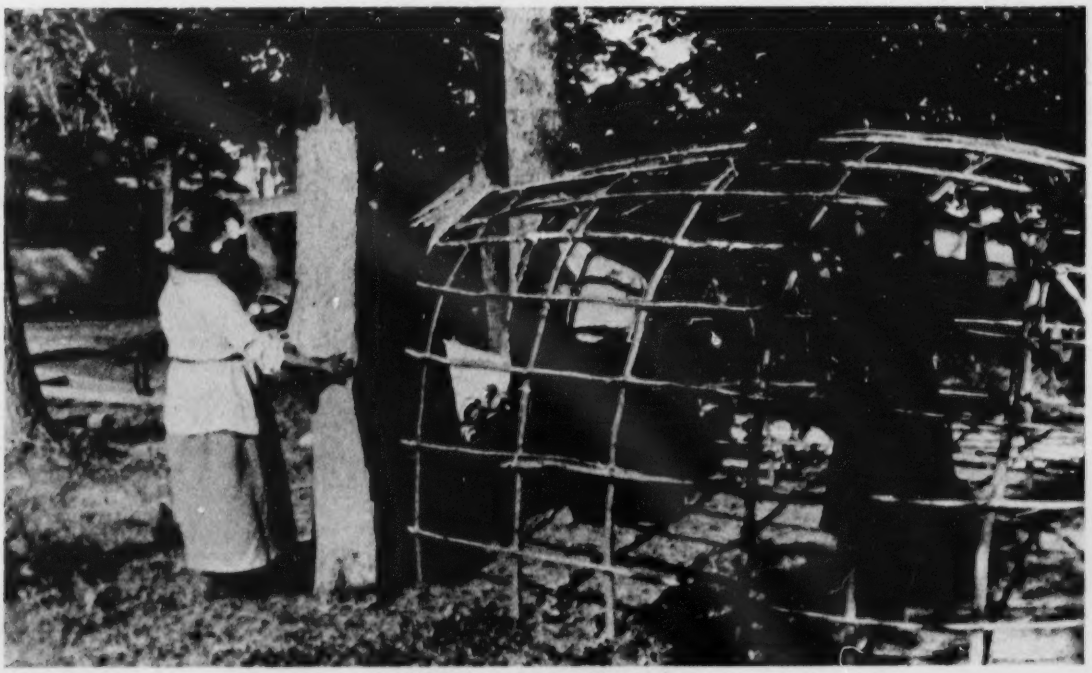
The mats for the sides were made of cattail rushes fastened together with cord made of basswood bark. The mats for the roof were made from large pieces of birchbark sewed together. Both the sides and the roof of the wigwam could be removed and rolled up, fastened with strong cord, and easily moved from place to place. A blanket or hide was hung over the entrance.

The Ojibwe copied the teepee from the Dakota and often used it when they were camping or going on short trips. Sometimes they used rolls of birchbark for the covering, but these were stiff and did not stay in place as well as a covering of hide or cloth.

If Ojibwe bands were living where there were many elm trees, often the framework of poles was tied together in the shape of a cabin. Then it was covered with large pieces of elm bark. The pieces were tied in place with strips from the soft, inner bark. Such a dwelling lasted a long time.

Even after the Dakota and Ojibwe had houses built of wood or brick, they continued to use teepees and wigwams near their houses. With the covering partly raised the teepee was cool in summer. The wigwam was also cool, for the thick birchbark on top kept out the heat of the sun.

The yellow side of the birchbark was inside the wigwam, making a soft light that was restful to the eyes. Some of the rush mats were removed from the sides of the wigwam, and there were bright, pretty mats on the ground at the door. The wigwam was usually in the shade of a tree and often near a little stream of water.



Fastening mats to a wigwam frame.
Mille Lacs Reservation

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Costumes. Posed by the Gagewins. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

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Clothing

In the early days the clothing of both the Dakota and Ojibwe was made of animal hides. Thick hide was used in making moccasins, and softer skins were used for leggings, shirts, and dresses. A woman knew how to select hides for various uses, just as your mother selects cloth in a store.

The moccasins made by the Dakota had seams around the edges of the soles, and the sole was made of stiffer, thicker leather than the upper part. Winter moccasins were made of buffalo hide with the hair on the inside. Sometimes women used rabbit skins with the hair left on to make warm moccasins for children.

Ojibwe moccasins were generally made of moose hide, because it was very tough and wore a long time. Deerskin was soft and pretty, but heavier hides lasted longer.

The moccasins worn by the Ojibwe had a "tongue" in the front. The leather that formed the sole was brought up, gathered, and sewed to this tongue. In modern moccasins this rounded piece was usually made of black velvet and often decorated with beads and silk sewn with fancy stitches. Sometimes it was bound with red ribbon. There was also a velvet "cuff" trimmed with ribbon, and there were ribbons to tie the sides of the moccasin together.

Until an Ojibwe child was five or six years old, he or she wore only a shirt and moccasins. One deerskin was large enough to make the single garment that a child wore. Later, traders brought cloth, but it cost a great deal. The old people said that mothers made little coats and hoods for the children from old blankets.

In the old times a woman's garment consisted of two deerskins, one for the front and one for the back. The sewing, as on moccasins, was done with sinew from the back of a deer. It was possible to separate the sinew into very thin thread for fine sewing or to use several pieces together, if a stronger thread were needed. The sinew for sewing was not twisted, as it was for a bow string. The threads of sinew were more like ravelings of cloth than like any other material we know. Moccasins and leggings completed a woman's costume.

Later woolen cloth was used for women's dresses and leggings, but a woman always had a leather dress to wear when she was working. The sewing on a dress was done by punching holes in the leather with a sharp bone and threading stiff sinew through the holes. It took a long time to make a garment in those days.

The old style of cloth dresses for Ojibwe women had a skirt that came up to the arms and was held in place by straps over the shoulders. A belt or sash went around the waist. The sleeves were separate and were put on when they were needed. The

dresses were fastened together at the back. The garment looked somewhat like a small jacket, tied with strips of cloth or with ribbon in the front.

At first the only decoration was on a rather small piece of cloth on the front of the waist. This piece was trimmed with colored braid and was called the "rainbow." Later it was trimmed with beads. Indian women also purchased shawls from traders. These were made of brightly colored materials that lasted a long time.

A man's costume consisted of moccasins, leggings, and a breechcloth. Often men carried a blanket for covering.

An Ojibwe man's clothing.
Mille Lacs Reservation

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En route to Red Lake Reservation. -F.D.
Markham Hotel, Bemidji

Cabin where I stayed. -F.D.
The Pines, near Bena

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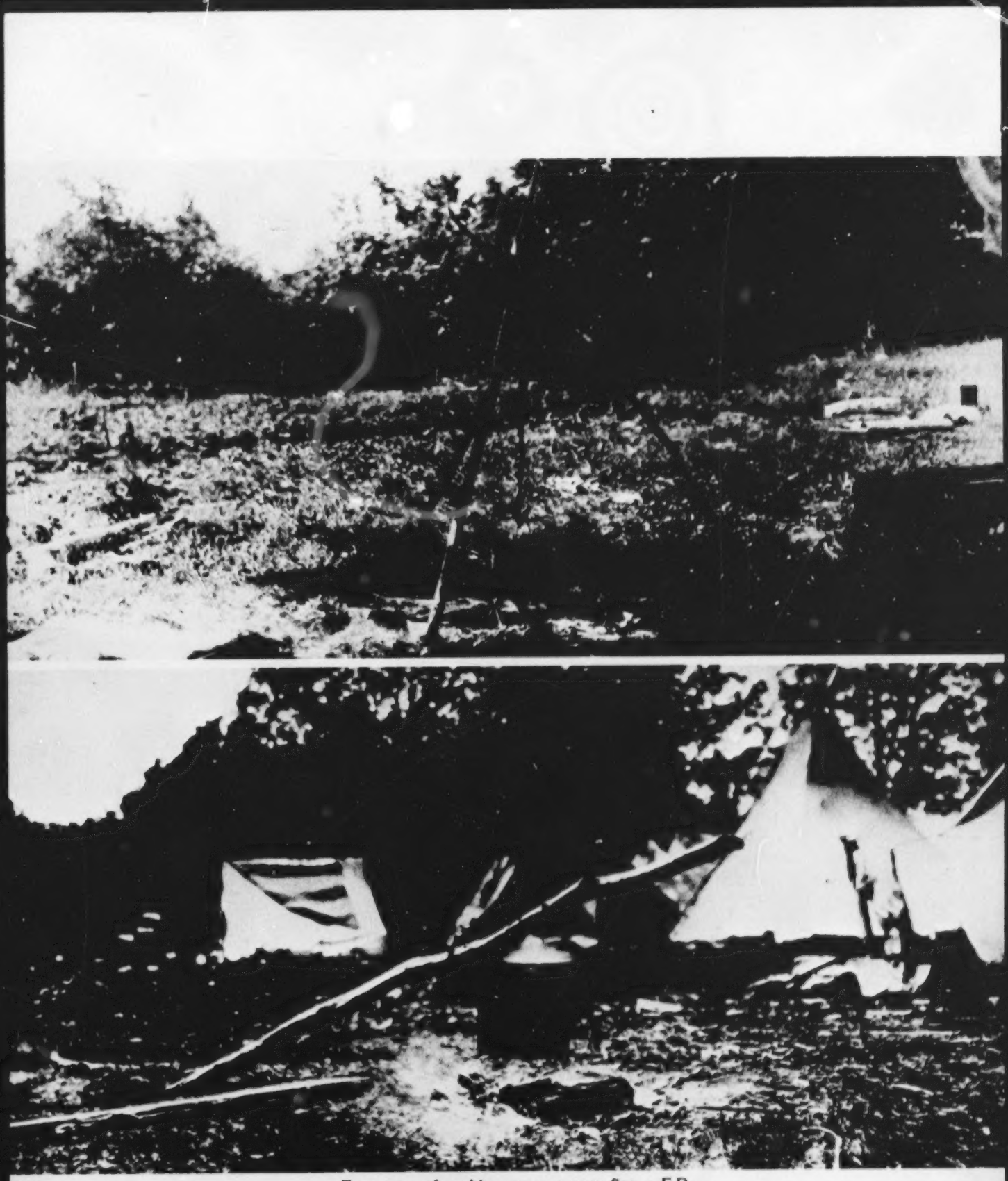

Two ways of cooking over an open fire. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

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Food

The Dakota

The principal food of the early Dakota was meat. In the winter they ate muskrats, badgers, otters, and raccoons. In the spring they ate fish and the roots of certain wild plants. In the summer they had wild pigeons and cranes, as well as fish and other roots. And in the autumn they killed wild ducks, geese, and muskrats.

Buffalo was hunted twice a year, and the meat was eaten fresh or dried and prepared in various ways. The tongue of the buffalo was considered the nicest part.

In the early times the Dakota boiled meat by digging a hole in the ground and lining it with a fresh hide. Into the hole they put the meat and water. Heated stones were then added, causing the water to boil and cook the meat. Buffalo flesh was also cut into strips and dried in the sun or over a fire. This was called "jerked meat," and it was used by many tribes living on the plains.

The favorite way of preparing buffalo meat was in the form of pemmican. For this thin buffalo steaks were dried, laid on a broad, flat stone, and then pounded with a smaller stone. In the old days people dug a large hole in the ground and lined it with a piece of hide, fitting it neatly all around. Then they put in the dried meat and pounded it with a heavy stone.

The pounded meat was like a powder with many shreds of fiber in it. This was usually mixed with melted fat, but marrow made even nicer pemmican. Sometimes women crushed wild cherries and mixed them with the pemmican.

The mixture was put into bags made of hide with melted fat poured on the top to seal it tightly. Buffalo hide with the hair on the outside was often used for these bags. They were of various sizes and weighed from 100 to 300 pounds. Pemmican was very nourishing and could be kept in the sealed bags for three or four years.

The Dakota, like other tribes, had no salt until the traders came, and it took them a long time to learn to like it. Even in 1912 the older members of the tribe did not like the taste of salt.

Some of the Dakota who lived around the upper waters of the Minnesota River raised a small quantity of corn and beans. But their chief vegetable food was a root commonly called the "Dakota turnip" or **tipsinna.** This root was dug in August and was about as large as a hen's egg. The Dakota ate it raw, boiled, or roasted in ashes.

They also dried **tipsinna** and stored it for winter. The dried root was mashed between stones until it was like flour. Mixed with water, it was made into little cakes and baked over coals.

When the Dakota lived in northern Minnesota, they ate the wild rice that grew in shallow lakes. This was a nourishing food and easy to gather. They also raised corn and beans. Corn was never planted until the wild strawberries were ripe. They soaked the seed corn until it sprouted. Then the women planted the sprouts quite deep.

When the little plants had two or three leaves, the women loosened the earth around the roots with their fingers. As the plants grew taller, the women made the earth into little hills around each stalk, using hoes for the work. They usually planted a variety of corn with small ears that ripened quickly.

The women gathered the ripe ears in their blankets and spread them on platforms or scaffolds. Women and children had to stand on the platforms to drive away the birds that came to get the corn. When the husks began to wither, they took off the outer leaves and braided the rest. These braids were then hung up to dry.

Some of the corn was boiled or dried and put into bags. The bags, containing one or two bushels, were placed in a hole lined with dry grass and covered with earth firmly stamped down. Corn stored in this way would keep dry and fresh from September until the next April.

The Ojibwe

The food of a family depended upon where they lived. Fish was the principal food of the Ojibwe who lived on the shores of Lake Superior and along the rivers. They ate fresh fish in summer and dried or smoked fish in winter.

The Ojibwe had many ways of preparing fish. The littlest babies were given fish soup. Fish heads were considered very good when boiled and seasoned with maple sugar. Fish eggs were boiled or fried.

Fresh fish were cleaned and put between sections of a split stick that was placed in the ground, leaning over a fire. Sometimes the fish, without being cleaned and with the head uppermost, was stuck through with a sharp stick that was slanted above a fire. The stick could be turned to cook the fish on all sides.

In the fall the Ojibwe strung sunfish in bunches of ten or twelve and froze them for winter use. When the snow was deep around the wigwam, they peeled off the skin and cooked these little fish.

Sometimes they strung small fish on strips of basswood bark and hung them in the sun to dry. Then they packed them in layers without salt.

Ducks, wild pigeons, and other birds were cooked in various ways. Sometimes they cooked small birds in hot ashes without removing the feathers. Sometimes, after removing the feathers, they put a sharp stick through the bird, placing the stick upright in front of a fire. They also boiled birds with wild rice, potatoes, and meat.

Deer was the principal game hunted by the Ojibwe, although they also killed moose, bear, rabbits, and other animals. (Beaver tails were considered a great luxury, because they were so fat.) Fresh venison was sometimes boiled with wild rice. Sometimes it was cut into thin slices,

Netting fish.
White Earth Reservation

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Drying fish. Posed by Mrs. Razer —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

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roasted, and then pounded on a flat stone. Then it was stored in birchbark boxes, called **má-kuks**, with the covers sewed down with split spruce root.

If deer were killed in the fall, the Ojibwe cut a portion of the meat into strips, dried it over a fire, and wrapped it in the hide. In the winter they boiled this meat or prepared it in other ways. Often they cut the dried meat into pieces, spread it on birchbark, and covered it with another piece of bark. A man then stomped heavily on the upper piece of bark until the meat was crushed. Meat prepared in this way was called by a name meaning "foot-trodden meat."

If deer were killed during the winter, they dried the meat enough to keep it until spring. Then they put it in the sun to finish drying.

After the Ojibwe drove the Dakota out of northern Minnesota, they had plenty of wild rice, as well as quantities of strawberries, blueberries, cranberries, wild plums, cherries, and other fruits. The Ojibwe had several recipes for cooking acorns and dug certain roots commonly called "Indian potatoes." In the spring they made maple sugar and syrup. In early summer they planted corn, pumpkins, and squash.

Ojibwe women were very good cooks and knew how to use all sorts of seasonings. In the early days, however, they had no pepper or salt. Maple sugar was used to sweeten and season all foods. They also used wild ginger. They made tea out of wintergreen, raspberry leaves, or little twigs of spruce. In summer they made a refreshing drink by putting a little maple sugar into a cup of cold water.

Before they purchased steel knives from the traders, the Ojibwe made knives from the ribs or other bones of animals. These were sharp enough to cut meat. The first metal knives used by Indian people were similar to bread knives.

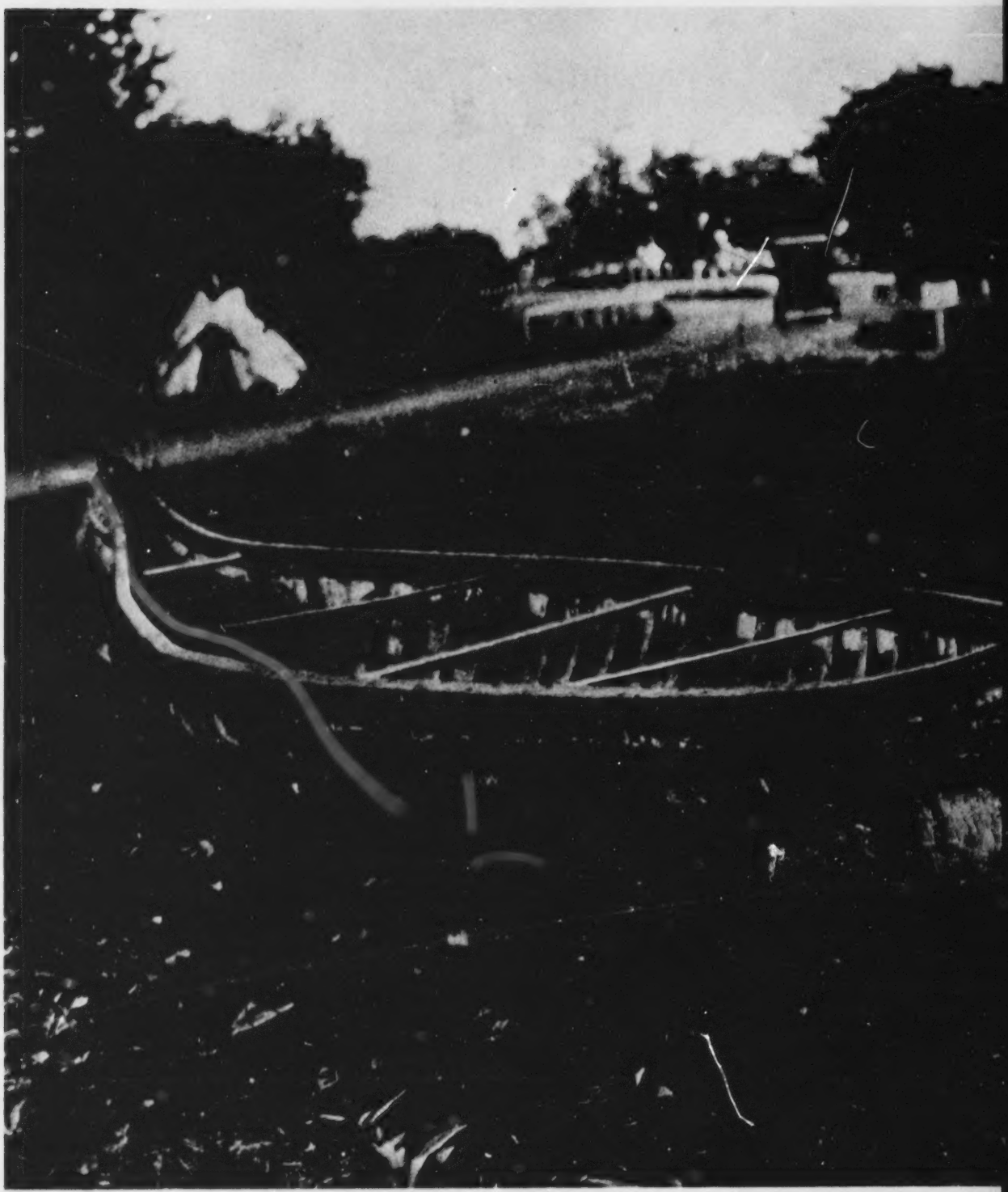
They took files purchased from traders to blacksmiths who made them smooth and slightly curved. Then they attached wooden handles and had what they called "curved knives." They could cut down with them, or hold them sideways and scrape or scoop with them.

Knots of trees were used for making bowls and spoons by scooping out the inside with a curved knife. Later, they whittled the outside of the knot into the right shape, polishing it with a piece of leather. Clamshells also often served for spoons, and pointed sticks were used for taking meat out of a boiling kettle.

Cups and all sorts of dishes were made from birchbark. The women were able to heat water in freshly cut birchbark. To do this they made a "kettle" of folded birchbark, fastened at the ends with strips of bark. The inside of the birchbark was on the outside of the kettle. This was cool and moist. Water placed in the kettle and hung over a fire heated before the bark dried enough to burn.

The Ojibwe said that their ancestors long ago made clay dishes of "mud and sharp sand and glue" in which water could be heated. The glue was made by boiling the hoofs of animals.

The old-time Ojibwe ate only once a day, usually about the middle of the morning, but children could get food at other times when they were hungry. If food were plentiful, a man might go to seven feasts in one day. He was expected to eat everything that was put in his dish. If food were scarce, the people suffered terribly.



A birchbark canoe.
Mille Lacs Reservation

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Travel

Minnesota Indian people traveled mostly by water. They had names for many lakes and rivers, and these names were descriptions by which a traveler would know the place. Thus, the Ojibwe called Mille Lacs Lake by a name that means "lake that spreads all over," and you would know this lake was very large. They called Lake Itasca by a name that means "elk lake," because the shape was like that of an elk's head with branching horns.

The people made maps for those who were going on long trips. Perhaps a man drew a map on the ground with a stick or in ashes, as he and his friend sat beside a campfire planning a long trip. He might also have made the map on birchbark or on a flat piece of wood, drawing it with a piece of charcoal and showing the rivers, streams, and lakes.

If one stream flowed into another, travel was not hard. But often it was necessary to carry the canoes from one stream to another in order to reach the place where the person wished to go. Places where they had to carry the canoes across a strip of land were also shown on the maps.

The Dakota used canoes made of logs. These were called dugouts. They were made by burning the center of a log and scraping out the charred wood until the outside of the log was the right thickness. Paddles were made of strong sticks.

The Ojibwe made their canoes from the bark of the white birch tree. The canoes were of different sizes and shapes. The war

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Canoe making. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

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canoes, built for speed, were long and narrow. The canoes for moving families from one place to another were comparatively wide, because space was needed for all sorts of bags and bundles as well as for children and dogs. There were small canoes for use by women when they went to pick berries.

Children learned to paddle a canoe almost as soon as they could walk. Nobody minded if a canoe upset in shallow water near shore. An old woman said, "The children were in and out of the water all the time, and their clothes dried without taking them off."

The paddles used by women were smaller and different in shape from those used by men. If a man and woman were both in a canoe, the man sat in front and paddled, while the woman sat in the back and steered.

When the Dakota traveled by land, they walked. Dogs drew their heavy loads. They did not have horses in the old days. A traveler wrote that the Dakota were hunting buffalo on foot in 1766. They ran so fast that they could overtake the buffalo, run beside it, and shoot their arrows at the great animal. Later the Dakota used horses, but for a long time dogs did all the hard hauling.

The Dakota had no carts, but they had something called a **travois**, which was the French word for the shafts of a cart. A **travois** was made from two long poles that were crossed and fastened above the shoulders of a dog or horse with the ends dragging behind. A leather harness fastened these poles to the animal. Across the dragging ends of the poles were crossbars, making a shelf or platform on which the baggage was piled. The teepee cover was folded and tied onto this shelf with all sorts of bundles. Sometimes the smallest children rode on top of the bundles.

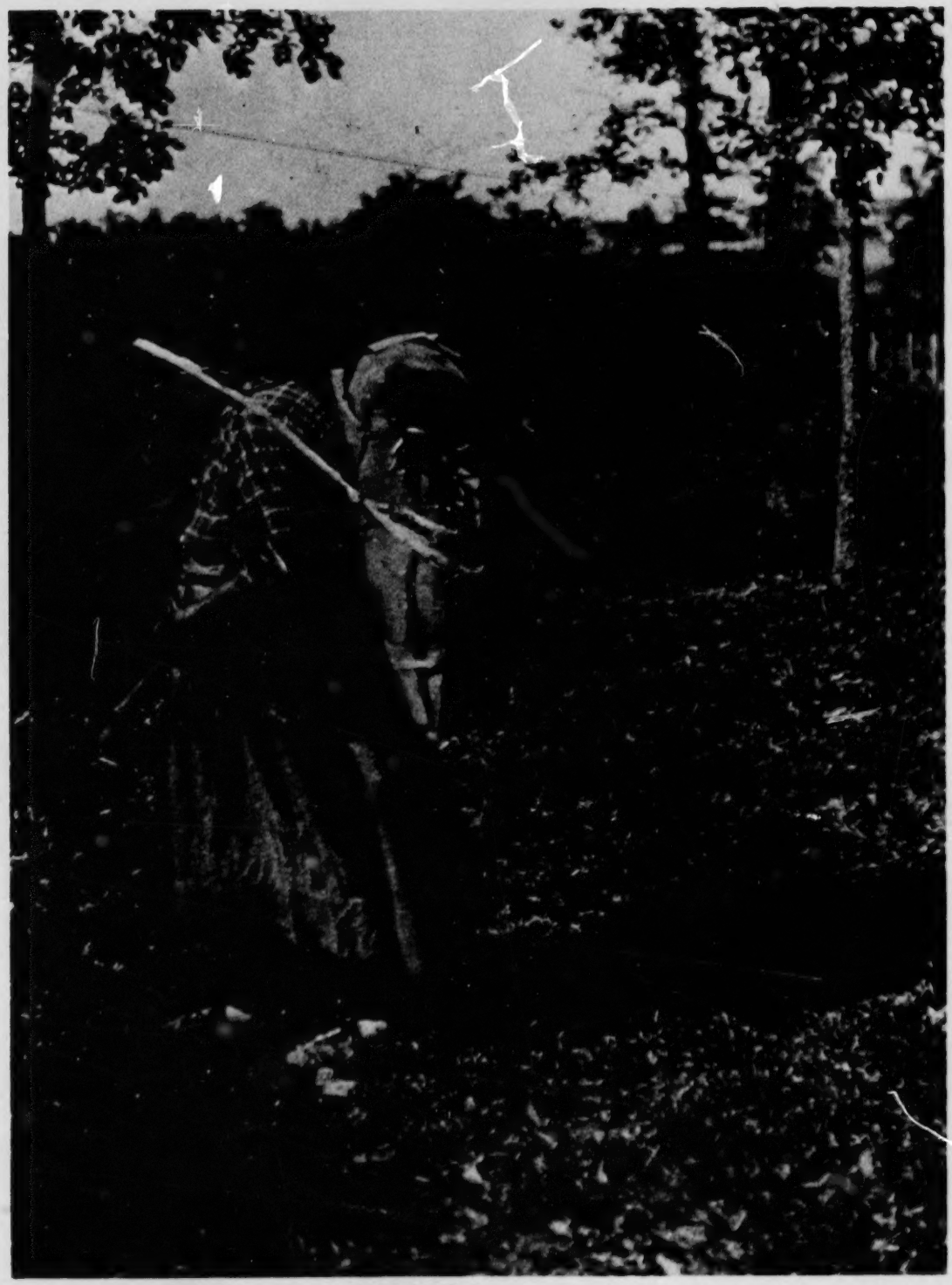
If the group were going to a place where trees were scarce, they might use the teepee poles for the **travois**. Then, when they reached a new camping place, they took the **travois** apart and used the poles to set up the teepee.

The dogs were trained for this work. If a mother dog had some puppies, a frame, like a bird cage, was often made and placed on the shelf of the **travois**. The puppies were put in this little cage, and the mother dog pulled the **travois**. When the people stopped to rest or make a camp, the children played with the puppies.

An Ojibwe woman knew how to carry a heavy pack on her back. She fastened a strap about halfway down the length of the bundle and placed the strap across the top of her head. Then she leaned forward and walked. The strap was called a pack strap and was a little wider in the middle than at the ends. One woman used her pack strap so much that it was buried with her.

When a woman gathered birchbark, she made it into a big, square bundle. Then she carried it home on her back with her pack strap. If the family were going on foot from one camping place to another, she carried the birchbark rolls for the top of the wigwam in the same way. She made them into a roll, and, perhaps, she put the baby on its cradleboard in the middle of the roll. The baby's face looked over the top of the bark rolls, as the mother walked along. If the mother was carrying only the baby's cradle, she might put the strap across her chest, because the cradle was so light. There were many ways of adjusting the pack strap, and every Ojibwe woman knew how to do it.

When the family was moving, the men had to look out for enemies who might attack them. How could a man defend his wife and children if he had a kettle in each



Carrying birchbark with a pack strap.
White Earth Reservation

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hand? So the women carried all the kettles and household goods.

When the Ojibwe traveled in winter, they wore snowshoes. It took a long time to make a good pair of snowshoes, and the Ojibwe had three kinds. Each had wooden frames and netting of rawhide. The oldest form was called the "bear-paw shoe," because it was almost round and left a mark in the snow like the footprint of a bear. The name came from an old story about a bear that wore snowshoes. Another kind of snowshoe was flat, with a short piece of wood that extended out at the back. This was good for traveling on level ground. A third kind had turned-up toes that were considered better for walking in the woods.

If a man were caught in a heavy snowstorm, he could make a pair of rough snowshoes from little branches without peeling off the bark. He shaped the frames, tied them with strips of green bark that he cut from the trees, and made the netting from narrow strips of the same bark. Hunters often made such snowshoes when a storm overtook them in the woods.

Although the Ojibwe had dogs to draw their heavy loads, they did not use the **travois** like the Dakota. This was because they lived in the woods and along the lakes and rivers where it would have been impossible to drag a **travois**. For winter travel they harnessed their dogs to sleds or toboggans. The dogs ran one behind another and could travel 40 or 50 miles in a day.

Early Indian people had many paths through the woods and across the prairie. There were paths from camps to the places where the women went every day to cut wood. Others went to the best places to pick berries. There were also paths made by the war parties. The larger ones were called trails.

When the fur traders came and built trading posts, Indian people often took their furs to the posts, exchanging them for goods in the store. Gradually, these trails grew into roads. Later, after reservations were established, the largest trails led to the Indian agencies. The old trails are shown on some of the early maps, and many modern highways and railroads were built along these Indian routes.

Snowshoes.
White Earth Reservation

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Susan Windgrow, a Dakota woman from Prairie Island, and Frances Densmore, 1930.

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Industries

The Dakota

Everything Indian people used was made by hand. Some became specialists in the tribe for the articles they made. Money did not pay for their work, but goods were exchanged. Thus a man who had a war club and wanted a bow and arrows might go to an arrow maker and say, "Will you take my club in exchange for a bow and some arrows?" The arrow maker might say that was not enough, so the man would have to add a knife or some other article to make up the difference.

A man's arrows, as well as his bow, were made according to his height. The arrow maker would say, "Let me measure your arm, so I will get your arrows the right length." In this way the bow and arrows were the size that the man could best use. Dakota arrows were longer than those used by the Ojibwe. This was partly because they hunted buffalo on the open prairie, while the Ojibwe hunted deer in the woods.

Perhaps a man liked one sort of wood better than another for his bow. If so, he would cut some of this wood and have it ready when he needed a new bow. Some men liked the wood of the cherry or plum tree for their bows, while others liked a harder wood. Arrows were made of lighter wood, but it had to be firm and straight. The bowstring was made of the sinew of the buffalo that had been dried and twisted into a cord.

White Hawk, an old Dakota man, described the making of bows and arrows. He said it took a great deal of experience to do this work. The maker of bows and arrows was important to the life of the tribe, for hunting and success in war depended on good weapons.

White Hawk said that his great-grandfather used stone arrow points, and his father used bone that was very sharp. When he was a young man, White Hawk used arrow points made of steel. Sometimes a man purchased thin frying pans from a trader and cut them into arrow points. The fastening of the arrow point to the shaft was done with sinew.

Each arrow had three feathers. Some men thought that owl feathers were best, while others thought that the feathers of a certain hawk were better. A man could choose the feathers he liked best. He usually ordered 100 at a time and carried as many as he thought he would need in a rawhide quiver.

Every hunter had his own mark on the shaft of his arrows. If an arrow struck an animal and had his mark on it, he would say, "I killed this animal. The mark on the arrow proves it." Then he took the arrow out of the animal and used it again.

It is hard for us to realize the strength of an Indian bow. Some were so strong that a man could shoot an arrow entirely through the body of a buffalo. Others, not so strong, would drive the arrow up to the feathers into the buffalo's body.

Another important Dakota industry was the tanning of buffalo hides and the making of articles from the skins. A large part of

this work was done by women. Some of the hides were prepared with the hair on for use as robes. From others the hair was removed, and they were worked over until they became soft. These were used for teepee covers, as well as for clothing, moccasins, and many other purposes.

Still other hides with the hair removed were prepared in such a way that they were stiff. These were called **parfleche** and were used in making "turnip bags" to hang on the sides of a horse. Some were folded into cases for carrying blankets. Others were made into boxes of various sorts and sizes.

The Ojibwe

The work of the Ojibwe was connected with the seasons of the year. A man had to make his own calendar, and he did this by cutting a notch in a stick each day.

The Ojibwe had a name for each "moon," and the year was divided much as we divide it into months. Each moon had a name describing the season. May was the "flower moon," June the "strawberry moon," and September the "moon of shining leaves." The names of the winter months told of the freezing and the sharp snow that broke the netting on snowshoes.

An old Ojibwe woman said that her father had a long stick for keeping count of the time. He cut a notch in the stick every day, and when he saw the new moon, he cut a deep notch. The people counted the number of days from the time the new moon first appeared in the sky. If it was the third day of August, they would say, "This is the third day of the rice moon," for August was the time when the wild rice ripened.

This woman's name was No-din-ens, which means "Little Wind." When the wild rice and other food for winter had been put away, the father of Little Wind began a new stick. The little girl and her mother prepared for winter. The old grandmother helped them.

The cold was coming, and the mother knew just how many mats would be needed to make the wigwam comfortable. They gathered rushes and cattails. The mother measured pieces of string the right length for making each mat, and they all worked together. Mats of this sort were used around the walls of the wigwam, while the rush mats were used on the ground around the fire. The mother also wove bags of raveled blankets or of yarn for holding clothes and other articles.

These people lived at Mille Lacs Lake. As soon as the ice froze on the lake, the family started for the hunting ground. The little girl carried half their rush mats, and her mother carried the other half. Six families went together and made a camp in the woods. They carried wild rice, dried berries, and other food. They expected to kill deer for meat during the winter.

When a man killed his first game, his family made a feast and invited everyone in the camp. That meat was cooked separately from the rest. When the guests came, the man made a speech and prayed that they all might have safety, health, and a long life. Then they ate this special meat before the real feast began.

All winter the men went hunting, and the women prepared the hides, dried or froze the meat, and were busy with many kinds of work. They mended the men's clothing, torn going through the woods, and they

Preparing basswood bark. Posed by Mrs. Razer. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

Weaving mats.
White Earth Reservation

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Posed to show smoking of deer hide. Loosened hair shows woman was in mourning. —F.D.

Red Lake Reservation

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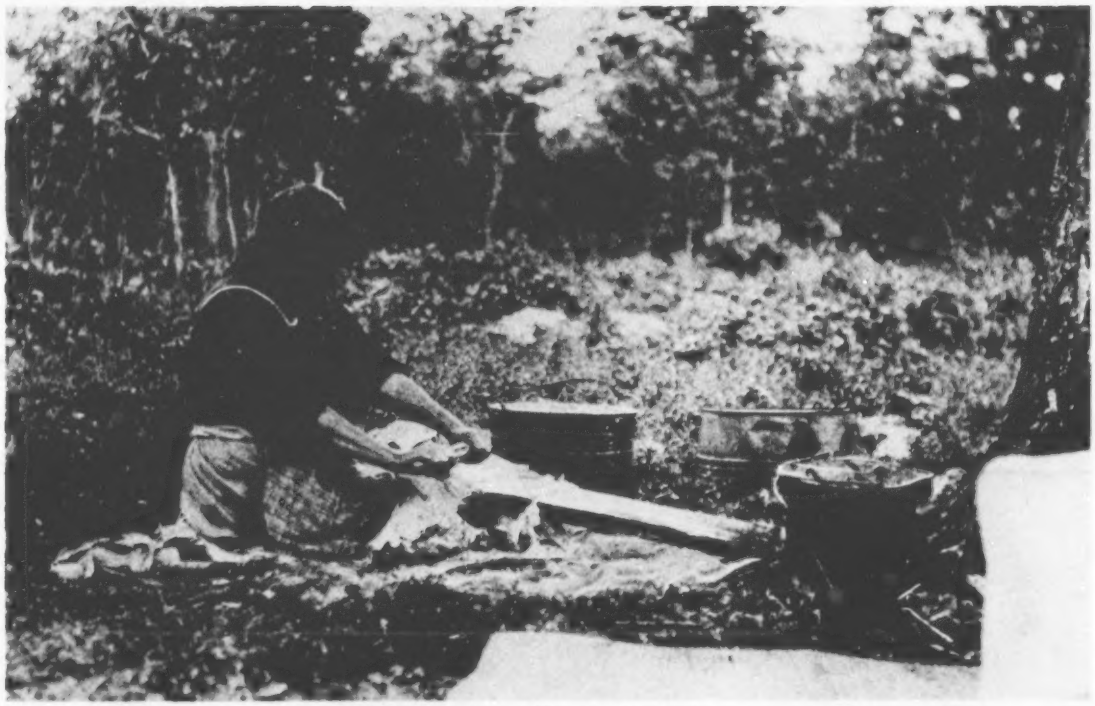

Preparing hides. Mille Lacs Reservation

made new coats and moccasins. Each man needed two or three leather suits, because they wore out so fast. Some of the hunters had to go long distances in search of game. Others did not go so far, coming home at night.

The principal animals hunted were deer, moose, fox, and wolf. The young people snared rabbits and other small animals and killed partridges.

When the days began to grow a little longer, the old people looked at the notches on their calendar sticks. They counted them, and one man might say to another, "According to the notches on my stick, it is almost time for the crows to come back." The other man might say, "You must have made a mistake. Mine is not like that. Besides, the weather is still cold, and the ice is thick on the lake. I think your stick is wrong."

Everyone listened for the first crow, knowing that the crows arrived about March 20. Some said, "The crow is the great-grandmother of the Ojibwe, coming to assure them that they have escaped starvation one more winter." At last someone heard, "Caw! Caw!" The crows had come back. The men counted the notches on their sticks. If there was a mistake, they started over again on the day they heard the first crow.

The people had a song in which they sang that the crow brought the spring rains. Everyone was glad, and they said, "Next will be the sugar boiling moon and we will go to the maple sugar camp."

Toward the end of winter Little Wind's father would say, "Spring is near, and we must get to our other work." The women wrapped the dried meat tightly in deerskins, and the men packed their furs

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Gathering birchbark. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

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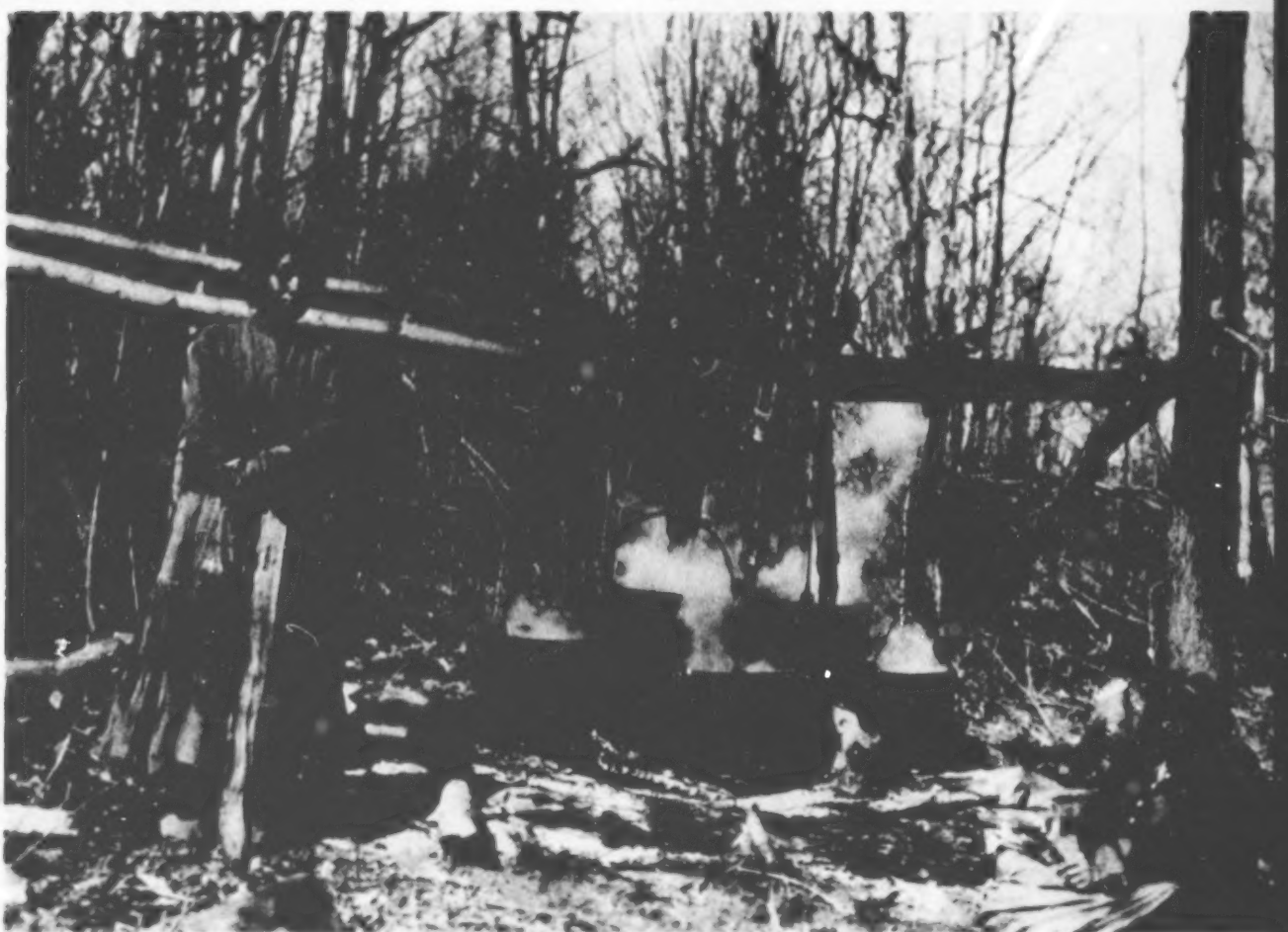
on sleds. It was still cold, and the children had to be wrapped warmly. The grandmother always had a supply of thorns from the thornapple tree. These were like long pins, and she used them to pin the children's coats together. Sometimes the father broke little branches from a tree and laced them across with strips of basswood bark to make snowshoes for the children. Then they left their winter home and started for the maple sugar camp.

Several families camped together when making maple sugar. The women stored birchbark dishes at the camp from one year to the next, and the frame for a lodge had been left standing. The women soon mended it where necessary.

After the sugar making was started, the men sometimes went to trap muskrats or other animals. This was a good time for trapping, and the hunters often came back with $100 worth of furs. The young people and women carried on the work of gathering and boiling the sap.

Birchbark was easier to remove from trees in the spring, so the women also gathered great rolls of it for making pails,



Boiling maple sap.
Mille Lacs Reservation

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Drying fishnets. Posed by Mrs. Razer. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

boxes, and dishes. When work was completed at the sugar camp, the families packed up again and went to a place that was good for fishing.

Fishing was an industry that lasted all year. In late spring a supply of fish was caught in order to have plenty when other tasks took the people away from the water. The women wove nets for catching fish from cord they made from the fiber of nettle stalks.

After spring fishing, it was time to plant gardens. Little Wind said that the Ojibwe grew Indian potatoes, corn, and pumpkins. She could remember seeing her father use the shoulder blade of a deer for a hoe. It had no handle, and he held the bone in his hand, as he dug up the ground. After the gardens were planted, the Ojibwe held a religious ceremony, praying that they might have food and a long life.

Summer was a good time to gather herbs for medicine. Some of these were secret and known only to the doctors. Others were common remedies that every mother gave to her children when they had colds or other ailments. Few tribes had such a large knowledge of plants and their uses as the Ojibwe.

One mother told her children to gather all the bright, pretty flowers they saw in the field. She dried the flowers, crushed them to a fine powder, and made a tea that the children liked to drink. This taught the children that plants and flowers were not simply pretty, but had other uses as well. When the children were older, the mother showed them which plants were gathered for simple medicines.

Women visiting far from home always looked for plants that did not grow where they lived. They took the leaves or roots home to add to their stock of medicines.

The usual way of preparing medicine was in the form of tea, but they knew many other ways. Sometimes the dried, crushed roots were mixed with grease, making a salve.

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Wild fruits and berries were also gathered during the summer. This was a task in which the children helped. A little girl carried a cup for her berries and emptied them into a birchbark pail that her mother carried, fastened around her waist. Some of the berries were dried and packed away for use in the winter.

Wild rice was ripe in the early fall, and at that time the Ojibwe went to the rice fields. Again, a few families camped in the same place every year. Thousands of acres of rice grew in the shallow water at the edges of small lakes and in the quiet curves of streams in northern Minnesota. Rice was the principal food of the people.

In the gathering of wild rice, a canoe was pushed gently through the tall stalks. A woman held a short stick in each hand. With one stick she bent the stalks, and with the other she knocked the kernels of rice into the canoe.

When she had gathered all she could carry in the boat, she went back to the camp where the rice was prepared. First, it was slightly parched in a kettle to loosen the husks. Then it was poured from a flat basket onto large pieces of birchbark, letting the wind blow away the bits of husk. When the chaff was gone, the rice was put into bags woven of narrow strips of bark. A little dry grass was put across the top, and the edges were laced together.

When Little Wind's mother had finished the rice making, her father cut the last notches in his stick. The work of another year was over. A new stick had to be started.

Harvesting wild rice.
White Earth Reservation

Preparing rice.
White Earth Reservation

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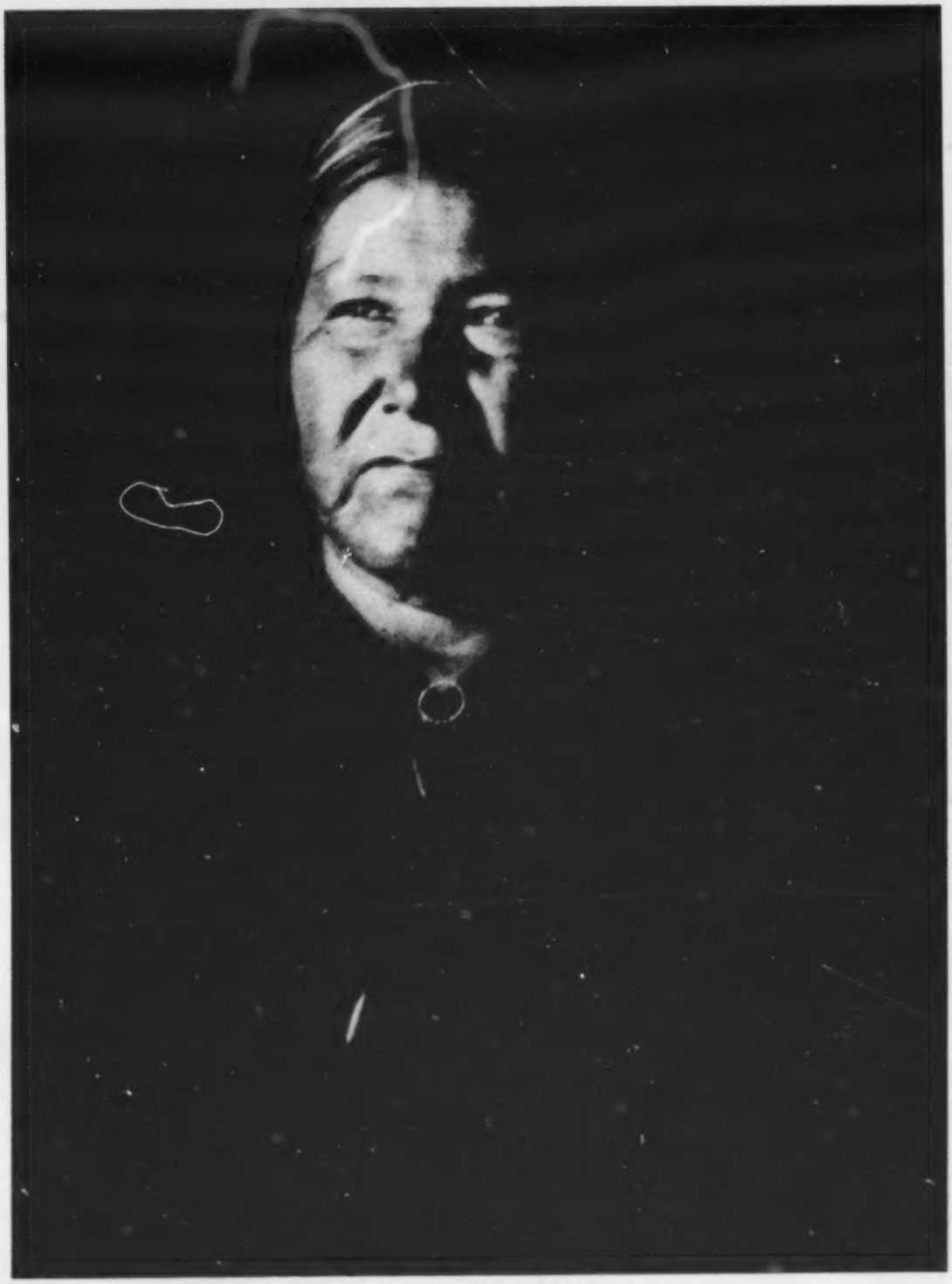

Mrs. Gagewin. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

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Picture Writing

The Dakota

Indian people had no printed books and they did not write words, but they could tell a whole story in a picture. Sometimes they sent messages in the form of pictures to their friends, who could read the messages just as you read letters.

A Dakota man often told of his brave deeds through pictures drawn on the outside of his teepee. To color the pictures he used minerals or colored earth, powdered and mixed with water or oil. For a brush he often used a certain bone in the knee of a buffalo. It had a sharp edge for drawing fine lines and a broad, flat side for spreading a larger amount of paint. Sometimes he chewed one end of a piece of wood or bark and used it for a brush.

It was the Dakota custom to draw a picture of the most important event that happened each winter. This was called a "winter count" and was like a calendar. A few of these old calendars, painted on buffalo hides, were placed in museums.

A great many years were often represented on each calendar. An old Dakota man was once asked to read one of these calendars and tell what each picture meant. He described one year after another from the pictures.

One picture showed the coming of a white man wearing a tall hat. Then came a picture of a little boy with a bird in his hand. The old man was asked to explain this, and he said, "My mother died when I was a baby, and my grandmother took care of me. When we were going from one camping place to another, I tried to kill birds with my bow and arrows. I took the birds to my grandmother, and when we camped at night, she cooked them for our supper. The picture shows me with a bird I have just killed.

"My grandmother is also in the picture with a pack on her back, carrying some little birds in her hand. She carried them until we stopped at night. I do not know what happened to the whole tribe that year, but I remembered it as the first year that I killed birds for our food." According to his calendar, this took place when he was seven years old. This man's name was Jaw, and in the Dakota language it is pronounced Chay-hoó-pah.

The Dakota and other tribes living on the plains also used sign language. A man of one tribe could make himself understood by a man of any other tribe by talking with his hands.

Perhaps you would like to learn to count in the Dakota way. Even at the present time [*1938*] an old man often counts on his fingers. If he is counting to ten, he takes the little finger of his left hand between the thumb and fingers of his right hand and folds it down against his left palm, saying **wan-cha**, which means "one." Then he folds down the next to the little finger, saying **non-pah**, which means "two." He does this with one finger and the thumb

until he has counted five. Then he begins with the thumb of his right hand and one finger after another until he has counted ten.

After that, he counts by tens without turning down each finger. If he means "20," he opens and shuts both hands twice. If he means "50," he opens and shuts both hands five times. When he reaches 100 and has opened and shut his hands ten times, he calls that **op-win-gay**, which means "a turn." Ten turns make a "turn again." If he wants a number higher than 1,000, he says it is a "big count." He does not try to tell the exact number. An Indian person does this counting very fast, and it is convenient for ordinary numbers.

The Ojibwe

The Ojibwe did not seem to have made as many pictures of their war expeditions as the Dakota. They made pictures of two kinds: one, a travel story or message; the other, showing the history and teachings of their native religion and the words of its songs. They also drew pictures on rocks, where they could be seen like pictures hung on a wall.

The Ojibwe usually drew their pictures on pieces of birchbark, using charcoal or a sharp, pointed bone. Sometimes they drew them on a smooth, flat piece of cedar. The wood was often easier to get than birchbark and was large enough for a short message.

Once a group of Ojibwe people were going down a river, and they found a message warning them of danger. It was in the form of pictures on a flat piece of wood. A man took the piece of wood from the place where his friend had put it and read this message: "Three canoes of people camped for two days at a place not far away, where a stream flows into the river. They saw three Dakota Indians. Two of those enemies had guns.

"So the people hurried down the river, although they had found plenty of food in that place. There were no children with them. A Woodpecker Man was paddling the first canoe, and someone belonging to the Snake clan was steering. They had several people of the Bird clan in their canoe. There was a Catfish Man and a Bear Man, with some more of the Bird people in the next canoe. Last came a Wolf Man, all by himself in a little canoe."

The message was as good as a newspaper. Probably the people who received it turned around and went away. They would not want to go ahead, if there were three Dakota hiding in the bushes, two of them with guns.

Ojibwe pictures having to do with religion were not understood by all members of the tribe. The religion was called the **Mi-day-wi-win** or "Grand Medicine Society." Many of the pictures represented the words of songs, and others were connected with the history and teachings of that religion.

The hundreds of pictures reminded a singer of the words to the songs. He usually had these pictures on little rolls of birchbark. Ten songs made up a set, and each set of songs was on one piece of birchbark.

If he wanted to sing some of the songs, a man might unroll the piece of birchbark, look at each picture, and hum the beginning of each song. There was nothing like notes or musical signs — only the picture of what was expressed in the words.

If a person who did not understand the native religion should see one of these rolls, he would not know what the pictures meant. In this way the words were kept secret.

Posed to show manner of sitting when writing on bark. —F.D.
White Earth Reservation

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Manitou Rapids Reserve, Ontario, Canada

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Children at Home

The Dakota

An entire Dakota family lived in one teepee. On winter evenings, as the people sat around a fire, the men told stories. They liked to tell things that made everyone laugh — things that had happened to them or to their friends. They never talked about business at home. That talking was done in councils.

Evening was a good time for the mother to sew or to patch moccasins that had holes in them. The children listened to what the men were saying, and they looked at the bright fire until they could not keep their eyes open any longer. Then they rolled over without undressing, drew the robes or blankets over themselves, and fell asleep. The dogs crept close to the children, so they would be warm when the fire burned low. After a while, the men stopped talking, the mother laid aside her sewing, and everybody lay down where he or she had been sitting and went to sleep.

If a child awoke in the night, he might hear the faraway sound of a flute. He would laugh and say to himself, "There goes Red Bird, playing his flute so the daughter of Two Bears will hear him." Then he would think how he would tease the daughter of Two Bears the next day, saying, "I heard Red Bird playing his flute for you last night."

Perhaps he heard the cry of a loon or the howling of wolves. He might hear something even more dangerous than wolves. He might hear the leader of a war party making a noise like an owl or some other wild creature as a signal to his warriors. Such signals were given when a camp was to be attacked at daybreak.

One of the first things an Indian child learned was to keep still when frightened. This was necessary for the safety of everyone. A child's cry might let the enemy know where they were. Self-control in every form was taught to children. A person did not let himself be upset, and a man who lost his temper was somewhat disgraced.

Children had names that showed their order in age, such as "Number One Boy," or "Number One Girl." If the oldest child was a boy, he was called **Chá-ska**. If the second, third, fourth, and fifth children were boys, they were called **Hé-pan, Há-pee, Chá-tan**, and **Há-ka**. If the oldest child was a girl, she was always known as **Wee-nó-nah**. The second, third, fourth, and fifth girls were called **Há-pan, Há-pistí-na, Wań-ske**, and **Wí-hake**. With this custom a little girl need not tell anyone how many older sisters she had, for it was shown by her name. These, of course, were not the only names that children had, but they were the ones usually given them first.

The Dakota were very fond of their daughters and wanted them to be quiet and well behaved. They said a girl should be shy, like a little bird that stays near its nest. The boys were taught to be brave and

Manitou Rapids Reserve, Ontario, Canada

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trained to be good hunters and warriors. They had small bows and arrows with blunt points to practice with when they were learning to aim and shoot.

Boys liked to be near the warriors and listen to what they said. An old man in North Dakota said that he and a few of his friends used to carry wood and water for the warriors when they had a meeting. Then the warriors would let them come inside and sit along the wall, where they kept very still and listened to everything.

One old Dakota leader told how he ran away with a war party when he was a little boy. His father was in the war party. When the boy was discovered, he was taken to his father who said, "Did your mother say you could come?" The little boy replied, "No, we were hunting birds and just came along to join you."

A cousin named Hairy Chin was one of the warriors. The boy's father told Hairy Chin to look after him, and that night Hairy Chin gave him some supper. All the men looked hard at him and said, "What a little boy to go on the warpath." He leaned over his dish and cut up his meat, but he was homesick already.

Then they said a man had come from the camp, his horse running very fast, and said a woman had died because her son ran away with a war party. The little boy began to cry and said, "That must be my mother. She always said that she would die, if I ran away with a war party." Then one of the warriors said, "They are only fooling you. They want to make your heart strong." But that did not make any difference. The little boy thought of his mother and kept crying.

He could not go back, and he was with the war party for three weeks. When he reached home, his mother did not scold

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Mille Lacs Reservation

him. She had made some moccasins and gave them to him. She did not take much notice of him unless he started to leave the teepee. Then she said, "Where are you going?" She watched him so closely that he could hardly move. This lasted a long time.

When a boy was 12 years old, he was expected to go away and stay by himself without food until he had a dream, called a vision. Some boys stayed three, four, or even ten days waiting for this dream. If a boy came home without seeing a vision, his father might say, "If you are as hungry as that, you may have some supper, but you must go tomorrow and try again. I will not have a son of mine give up as easily as you are doing. I will make you go back until you succeed. Everyone will laugh at you, if you keep on acting in this way."

When a boy had seen a vision, he went home and told his father about it. The custom was not always exactly the same, but the boy's father usually sent him to a holy medicine man who had a similar dream when he was young.

This vision was not like most dreams you have at night. It was very serious. The boy believed that what he saw in the dream was a spirit and that the spirit would help him succeed in life, if he did his part.

The holy man said he must wear something around his neck, something connected with his dream. If he saw an eagle, he might have to catch an eagle and wear one of its claws in a little bag. He also learned certain songs that the spirit eagle would hear. If he was in trouble, the boy was taught that the spirit would come and help him.

This dream decided what the boy would do, whether he would be a warrior or a doctor. After he had a dream, the boy was considered grown-up and was not called by his little boy name. He had a name that showed what he had dreamed about, such as Standing Bear.

The Ojibwe

The Ojibwe did not have large families, and a baby was a delight to everyone. If a baby was born in the night, its father let everyone know by firing a gun. Certain of his male relatives came quickly when they heard the gun, and they took the baby to an old man who carried it four times around the fire. While he did this, the people sang a song with words that meant, "We have caught the little bird."

Women never let a baby cry, if it could be quieted in any way. For this reason the babies and small children were somewhat spoiled, but no one seemed to mind. They were more anxious that a child should be straight and healthy and not afraid of anything.

It was necessary for a woman to have her baby with her all the time, and she used a "cradleboard." It consisted of a short board with bands fastened around the baby and a hoop over its head to hold playthings. Wide bands held the baby's body firm and straight. It was as though the baby were standing on its own feet.

The cradleboard was carried by a strap placed over the mother's head, the cradleboard hanging on her back. This left her arms free to carry other things. If she was working, she set the cradleboard upright against a tree. Sometimes she hung it on a low branch, letting the breezes sway it back and forth. When it was time for the baby to take a nap, she laid it flat on the ground or put it in a small hammock made of a blanket. When a baby was old enough, the mother put it in the blanket or shawl on her back. In this way she could carry it for many hours at a time.

Children had several names. Sometimes a baby received a nickname when it was very young and kept that name all its life. I knew a woman about 90 years old who was called "Little Money," because when she was a baby, her face was so round and bright the people said it was like a small piece of money. Another woman was called "Little Cat," because she scratched so savagely when she was a baby.

Soon after a child was born, its parents selected someone to give it a serious name. This was done in a ceremony with gifts and a feast. The person who gave the name had dreamed of some bird or animal and received the name in the dream. The names of people, such as Little Wolf or White Feather, were connected with such a dream.

Mothers did not scold or punish their children, but tried to govern them in other ways. They thought it would break a child's spirit to punish it severely. Instead, a mother would tell her children that the owl would get them, if they did not keep still. If they did not obey, she would go to the door of the wigwam, hold back the blanket that hung over the opening, and say, "Come in, owl. Come and get these children who won't be good."

Sometimes she would show the child an owl's ear, saying, "The owl will get you and put you in his ear." The little child thought of the big owl sitting up in a tree and thought how terrible it would be to be put in the owl's ear!

This is a true story about a little Ojibwe boy. It happened many, many years ago and was told by an old man who remembered his childhood. He said that his mother went to see a neighbor and left him alone in the wigwam. It was just after sugar making time, and the wigwams were to-

gether beside a lake, but he was afraid to stay alone.

He thought about the owl, for his mother had told him that the owl comes and punishes naughty children. At last he made up a song with words that meant, "I am very much afraid of the owl whenever I sit alone in the wigwam." He sang the song over and over again.

Some men in the next wigwam heard him, and they said, "That is a good tune. We have never heard it before. Let us learn it and sing it when we play the moccasin game. Perhaps it will bring us good luck." So the men learned the song and sang it for many years when playing the game. It was always known as the "Song of the Little Boy Who Was Afraid of the Owl."

If a person was very sad, he painted his face black with charcoal from the fire. Instead of spanking a child when it was naughty, or shutting it up, the mother painted its face black and sent it outdoors where everyone could see it. Sometimes a child was obliged to keep the charcoal on its face for a whole day. Everyone knew the child was being sorry for something it had done.

In summer the children often wanted to stay out too late at their play. Then a man put on a mask made of birchbark that looked white and ghostly in the twilight. He wore ragged clothes and walked with a cane. When the children saw him coming, they were glad to run home.

Sometimes the children were noisy in the evening when the older people wanted to talk. In a wigwam the mother could not say, "Children, go upstairs to bed, and do not let me hear another sound from you tonight." Instead, someone might say, "Let us play 'Sep.'" This was a game in which someone sang a song with very funny words and stopped suddenly, saying, "Sep!" This happened at the most exciting places in the words. Of course the children were surprised, and it was hard not to make a sound. If a child made a sound, he was out of the game. The child who kept still the longest won a prize.

When such a game began, one of the adults would say, "Let us have a pile of presents for the child who can keep still the longest. I will give this new pair of moccasins." Another would give a bow and arrows or a fancy belt.

If he liked, a singer could think up new words for the song, making them very interesting. But he often sang softer and softer and did not say, "Sep." The children listened, so as to be ready, and looked hard at the pile of presents. As the song kept on, they grew sleepy, cuddled down, and went to sleep. Then the older people could talk.

The game was begun again the next morning. This time the singer cried, "Sep!" at the funniest places, and all the children laughed. The one who held out the longest was given the pile of presents — the new pair of moccasins, the bow and arrows, and the fancy belt. Often there were little cakes of maple sugar among the presents. These were divided among the children, so everyone was happy.

Often at night, after the camp was quiet, an old man walked in front of the circle of wigwams. He was like a radio broadcast and told what the people would do the next day. For instance, he told the men to meet at a certain place to go hunting. He usually said that, if any young man were still visiting a girl, it was time for him to go home. His talk was like a sermon, and everyone could hear him.

White Earth Reservation

No names were mentioned, but he spoke of any bad things that had happened. Perhaps he said, "A little boy told a lie to his mother yesterday. If he does that again, he will be punished. We cannot have little boys telling lies." In the wigwam, even with the blanket over his head, the boy heard this and knew that he was being reproved.

Little girls played hide-and-seek, drawing long and short sticks to decide who should be first to cover her eyes. When all were ready, she sang a song with the words, "Butterfly, butterfly, show me where to go." It was believed that the butterflies played with the children. An old woman said she had often seen the butterflies come when the children called them. The children were taught never to hurt or destroy a butterfly.

A boy was taught to hold a bow when he was very young. The bowstring was a thin thread of inner basswood bark. Of course, it would not stretch and throw an arrow,

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but he learned the motions of shooting. This began his training for becoming a hunter and a warrior. When he was older, the boy had a real bow and some blunt arrows for shooting rabbits and birds.

Boys liked to take a long stick in each hand and pretend they were deer with four long legs. They capered around, acted like deer, and made people laugh. Some boys made a ski for one foot and tried to go downhill on it without falling. A cord was fastened to the toe of the ski and held for support. The boys always selected the steepest hills for this winter sport.

They had many rough sports in which the girls did not join, but in summer they often played house with the girls. They made a small wigwam and fixed it up like a real wigwam with a fire in the middle. The boys caught fish or killed rabbits or birds that the girls cooked. Sometimes their mothers gave them potatoes to cook in the ashes, and they had meals together.

Children found plenty of things to play with. Sometimes they took leaves of the pitcher plant and filled them with sand or wild berries. Sometimes they gathered red berries and strung them on thread made from the stalks of thistles.

They knew how to make tiny snowshoes from the needles of the Norway pine. They pulled one needle from the "holder," turned the other back, and tucked it into the place from which they had pulled the first. This looked like the frame of a snowshoe. Sometimes they linked many of these together to make a necklace.

One of the first toys given to a child was a stuffed animal. The mother took the hide of some small animal, such as a squirrel or chipmunk, and stuffed it to make a toy. If she filled it with maple sugar, she made the stiches very loose, so the child could get a little sugar when it put the toy to its mouth. Sometimes she filled the skin with wild rice, which made a rather heavy toy.

The girls had dolls made of bark, rushes, leaves, or a bunch of grass. Later, with material obtained from traders, a little girl had a doll made of cloth and stuffed with moss. Her mother taught her to sew by making clothes with pretty beadwork for her doll. Her mother also taught her to make mats and birchbark dishes. In these ways she learned skills needed to help her mother.

Children were taught the forms of politeness. They were taught that they must not walk between an older person and the fire or interrupt an older person who was talking. They were told they must not go peeking in the wigwams after dark or laugh when anything unusual happened. They were also told they must not go to the neighbors when they were eating and look wistfully at the food.

Twelve-year-old Ojibwe boys, like Dakota boys, went away from the village in search of a vision. The Ojibwe also had a long ceremony for girls of that age. It was held in the early summer. A girl was not allowed to eat any fresh fruit before the ceremony.

During the ceremony, a holy man held a spoonful of the nicest fresh berries close to her lips and then took it away. He did this four times without letting her taste the fruit. This was to teach her self-control. Afterward she could have all the berries she wanted.

Patience, bravery, and self-control were taught to children from their earliest babyhood. These were the lessons they needed to learn to be useful members of the tribe when they grew older.

Pounding rice. —F.D.
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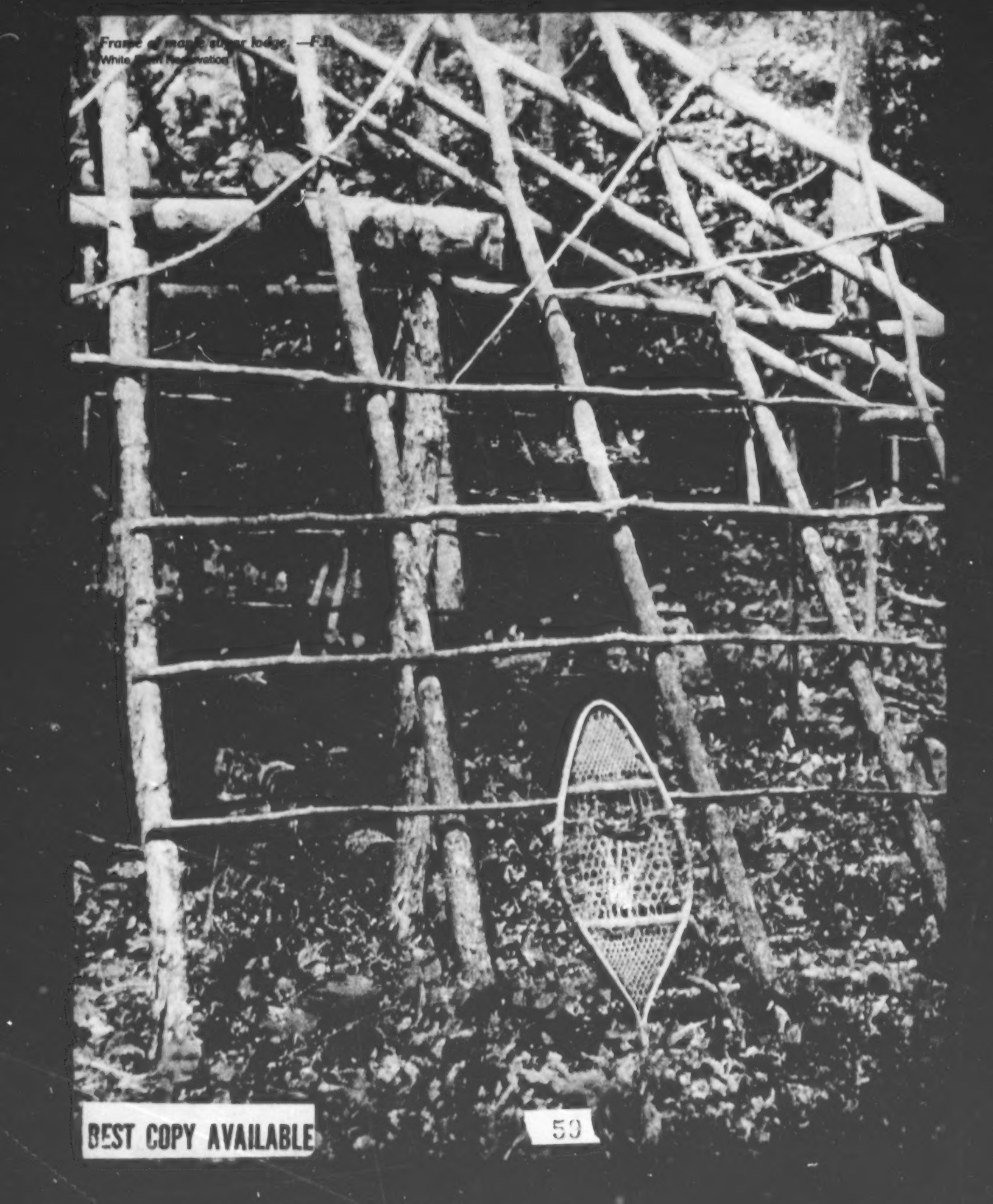

Frame of maple sugar lodge. —F.B. White Earth Reservation

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